

INTERNATIONAL NOMENCLATURE STEW

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[In the last issue of the BULLETIN you were introduced to Dr. Tom, (Dr. E. N. TOM OLOGY). At the time he happened to be playing his well known part in the Zoological comedy called, "Entomological Kow-towing." "Entomological Kow-towing" has always been a popular play, especially with Linnean Zoologists of the Tennessee type and Dr. Tom has been acting the part of chief kowtower for years, in fact he got his start in that company. Doc is a wonderful fellow, has many undeveloped potentialities and is by far THE BIGGEST drawing card and we hope that some day he can put on his own show, under his own name and play the leading part. There is no telling! At any rate, we hope you saw that last issue of the BULLETIN.]

Every so often the Zoologists hold a big formal party or Congress, though of late years these have become more or less informal. They are what you might call "park-your-guns-with-your-hat" and "try-to-get-together" affairs. The banquets are the main attraction and Dr. Tom always manages to attend, though only in the interest of what a majority stockholder might find out. He never gets to sit very near the food and what they serve usually makes him sick. You see they invariably have a kind of stew known as International Nomenclature Stew and poor Tommy has to take what is handed him. Usually its only a couple of oldish bones, binary nomenclature bones which have felt the touch of time, and they don't agree with him at all.¹

In the picture on the opposite page, we show the regular guests assembled. This was at the recent Padua Congress and we include the pathetic figure of poor old Dr. Tom already laid out with his usual case of ptomaine. The guests had arrived early; also hungry and how they mopped up! They seemed hungrier than usual. No parliamentary rules or procedure when it comes to partaking of good old Padua stew! Now, Uncle Sam and his friend Johnnie Bull are particular about their food. They are used to good stuff at home; so, when Uncle Sam did not dive in like

¹ N. D. Riley, systematic entomologist, of London says, "We overlook the time factor, or perhaps I should say, we cannot include the time factor in any (binary) two-dimensional scheme of classification. The old linear system is of course totally inadequate. Yet if we expect the theory of evolution, then our assessment of any (zoological) group must make allowance for time." (The parentheses are mine.)

the rest with his customary relish, all eyes were upon him. The reason he didn't was that when he first sat down, he thought the odor of the stew was off, somewhat punklike, and besides that he could see the condition of Dr. Tom from where he sat. So he nudged Bull and simply didn't eat, just nibbled a bit; and a feeling that he had been double-crossed came over him. Here is the inside story. It seems that several times before there had been some complaint about the stew and that at Padua, this time, fairly standard cooking had been promised, but evidently the promise, such as it was, had been overlooked and some one had fallen down on the job. Maybe they didn't think so, but they had. Was Uncle Sam going to get sick on poorly cooked stew? Well, I should say not! However, it's just that way with some 'fellers' of late and Uncle Sam is only beginning to find it out. They have a philosophy over there, new to him, which goes like this: if one nation makes a promise to another nation and does not wish to carry it out, all the first nation has to do is to say to itself, "That was a bad promise," and then break it. A strange philosophy, don't you think? Moreover, it's a common saying that, "a bad promise is better broken, than kept." A funny state of affairs, and one which is hard to contend with. I don't mean that we need a diplomatic change either.

But returning to Dr. Tom, what has he got to say? Well, Dr. Tom is an entomologist (I don't mean a democrat exactly!) and he knows that entomology dominates the zoological field and he thinks that it's about time that they hang out a new sign and print a new book which reads—"International Rules of ENTOMOLOGICAL Nomenclature." That would let the Zoological boys have their own backyard to play in for a change. It's a radical idea perhaps, but it's not new. By the way, why not arrange to call that Zoological meeting at Washington as suggested by Dr. C. W. Stiles in his article titled—"Is an International Zoological Nomenclature Practicable?" (*Science*, Apr. 3rd., 1931, Vol. 73, No. 1892, pages 349-354). The time is about ripe for such a step, as the delegates to the Fifth International Congress of Entomology held at Paris this summer will soon be returning home primed with "bad" Continental ideas and "good" fermentation! Go to it, Dr. Stiles! Round out your thoughts and assemble the clan. After 40 years of Zoological experience, you could well conduct an entomological-zoological or zoological-entomological band. No one else is better situated or suited. Washington would be with you, likewise London and the rest would eventually come tumbling after.